THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) to (c) The construction and maintenance of roads is the responsibility of the State Governments, for which funds have been allocated to them under the State Plans.

The Central Government are, at present, engaged in formulating a National Programme for Rural Connectivity in the context of which technological aspects pertaining to road construction would also be gone into.

Shortage of safe drinking water In Madhya Pradesh

1496. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages and the estimated population so affected in Madhya Pradesh that do not have safe drinking water; and

(b) how the Central Government propose to augment the efforts of the State Government to solve this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) As per the information provided by the State Government there are 3731 habitations in Madhya Pradesh, which do not have access to safe drinking water. The population affected is approximately 5,34,350.

(b) The State Governments have been allowed to take up projects under the Sub-Mission Programme to tackle the Water Quality issues, by utilising up to 20% of the funds allocated to them under the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). The expenditure for this purpose is to be met by sharing of funds in 75:25 ratio between the Central and the State Governments. Powers to plan, sanction and implement projects under the Sub-Mission Programme have been delegated to the State Governments, with effect from 1.4.1998.